

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CARDIN, MIKULSKI ANNOUNCE FEDERAL FUNDING TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS IN ST. MARY'S COUNTY

WASHINGTON. – **U.S. Senators Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski** (both D-MD) today announced the St. Mary's County Department of Public Safety won \$335,332 in federal funding through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program to recruit volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians. As a member of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Mikulski fights each year to increase federal funding for the fire grants program. Senator Cardin is chairman of the Homeland Security and Terrorism Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee.

"The first responders in St. Mary's County are some of the finest in our nation and I thank them every day for what they do for our community," said **Senator Cardin**. "This federal funding will ensure that St. Mary's County has the resources it needs to recruit the volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians who are essential to protect residents and respond to any emergency situation that may arise."

"This funding is about keeping first responders and the communities they protect safe," **Senator Mikulski** said. "In today's tough economy, fire departments don't need a hand out, they need a helping hand. These funds will help the volunteer fire departments in St. Mary's County recruit the firefighters and emergency medical technicians needed to protect our homes and communities. Every day when our first responders report for duty, they don't know what they will face. That's why I fight every year for the equipment, training, and staffing our protectors and communities deserve."

St. Mary's County Department of Public Safety will use the competitive award to hire a designated staff person to focus on recruitment and retention in the county's volunteer fire departments. For more information, please contact Jaclyn Shaw, emergency manager, at 301-475-4200.

The goal of any SAFER grant is to enhance the ability of grantees to attain and maintain 24-hour staffing. The objective of the program is to award grants directly to volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to help the departments increase the number of frontline firefighters, and to rehire firefighters who were laid off due to the economy.

Since 2001, Maryland fire departments and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) units have received nearly \$91 million in fire grant funding, nearly \$2 million of which has gone to fire departments and EMS units in St. Mary's County.

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